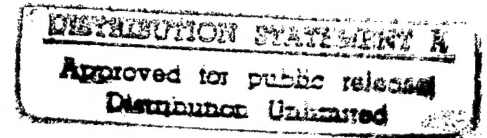


National Security and
International Affairs Division

B-270485

February 6, 1996

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States SenateThe Honorable Ron Lewis
House of Representatives

This report responds to your June 22, 1995, request that we review the status of and basis for an Army Cadet Command proposal to close the Second Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) regional headquarters at Fort Knox, Kentucky, while maintaining regional headquarters at Fort Lewis, Washington, and Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This proposal also included discontinuing the ROTC summer camp at Fort Knox and dividing it between Forts Lewis and Bragg.

Results in Brief

Because of questions relating to readiness, housing, and costs, the proposal to close the ROTC regional headquarters at Fort Knox has not been approved by the Army. As a result, the regional headquarters remains open at Fort Knox and the summer camp operated at Fort Knox is expected to remain in place through fiscal year 1996 and possibly 1997. Still unresolved are questions about the (1) impact of the ROTC program on training and readiness of combat units stationed at certain bases that house and support ROTC summer camp programs; (2) adequacy and condition of housing at bases being considered for consolidation of the ROTC program, both on a short- and longer term basis; and (3) costs to address the housing problem.

Background

ROTC was established to supplement the military academies in preparing students for commissioned military service and to provide officers for the reserve forces. The Army's ROTC program currently produces about 70 percent of its second lieutenants.

The Army's ROTC program operates under the auspices of the U.S. Army Cadet Command, a component of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), both headquartered at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Cadet Command currently has three regions—the 1st, 2nd, and 4th located at Forts Bragg, Knox, and Lewis, respectively. These regions oversee ROTC programs located at over 300 U.S. colleges and universities. To help prepare ROTC cadets to complete their commissioning requirements, the

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Cadet Command, through its regions, also operates one basic and two advanced summer camp programs from June to August each year. The basic camp, located at Fort Knox, provides training and introduction to military life to college students prior to their junior year, when they have not previously been a part of the ROTC program on campus.¹ It also encourages the participants to continue in the ROTC program on campus and to attend an advanced camp the next year. Advanced camps are held at Forts Lewis and Bragg.² Their missions are to train cadets to Army standards, develop leadership, and evaluate officer potential.

Because the Army is downsizing, the need for new ROTC-produced lieutenants is decreasing from 8,200 in 1989 to 4,500 in 1995. This is expected to be further reduced to about 3,800 in 1998. There has also been a reduction in resources available to the ROTC program—dollars and manpower. The ROTC funding level is expected to decrease from \$159.1 million in fiscal year 1992 to an estimated \$128.8 million (inflation-adjusted 1992 dollars) in fiscal year 2001. Further, its officer strength level is expected to decline from 1,375 in September 1992 to 1,163 in December 1995; additional personnel reductions are expected.

As a result of downsizing, the Cadet Command concluded that it must restructure its command and control framework, camp operations, and reduce the number of schools sponsoring ROTC programs. An internal study by Cadet Command, completed April 10, 1995, resulted in a proposal to close the ROTC regional headquarters at Fort Knox, and split its responsibilities for overseeing ROTC college programs among the two remaining regions. It also proposed to split responsibilities for basic camp between the two remaining regions and have them operate both basic and advanced ROTC camps. However, Cadet Command was also facing pressure from other Army officials to subsequently move its camp operations away from Fort Bragg, with Fort Benning, Georgia, being a potential location. Cadet Command wanted to begin making these changes effective in fiscal year 1996.

¹Approximately 2,100 cadets attended the basic camp in 1995.

²Approximately 5,500 cadets attended advanced camp in 1995; of those who attend advanced camp, approximately 75 percent can be expected to complete the ROTC program and be commissioned as an officer in the Army.

Decision Regarding Future of ROTC at Fort Knox and Restructuring ROTC on Hold for Now

Final approval of the Cadet Command proposal is contingent upon completion and approval of formal documentation of decision-making required by Army Regulation (AR) 5-10 involving stationing decisions.³ The Department of the Army has not approved Cadet Command's draft AR 5-10. We reviewed various data that were used to draft the AR 5-10 Cadet Command's proposal, but did not review the draft document. Various Army officials indicated it had not been approved because it was considered incomplete. Unresolved issues include cadet housing and impact on operational units at remaining and potential receiver locations.

These issues are not likely to be resolved quickly enough to allow a program restructuring, such as that proposed by Cadet Command, to be implemented in fiscal year 1996 and possibly 1997.

Questions Raised Regarding ROTC's Impact on Readiness of Combat Forces at Some Installations, Particularly Fort Bragg

While Cadet Command is a component of TRADOC and its 2nd region is headquartered at a TRADOC installation, its 1st and 4th regions are headquartered on installations housing combat forces controlled by the Army's Forces Command (FORSCOM). Questions regarding the impact of ROTC programs on FORSCOM units' training and readiness, and where best to locate restructured ROTC programs remain unresolved.

The ROTC basic camp program at Fort Knox is able to satisfy critical aspects of its camp training requirements through use of drill sergeants and instructors involved in basic training programs conducted at Fort Knox. Those personnel are augmented by Army Reserve training personnel, as well as ROTC personnel brought in from various locations.

ROTC's advanced camps at Forts Lewis and Bragg operate under a different program of instruction than does the basic camp, and rely more on personnel available from the FORSCOM combat and combat support units at Forts Bragg and Lewis. Officials at these installations as well as FORSCOM headquarters told us they had concerns about adverse impacts on their units' readiness from supporting ROTC camps—support that takes the form of considerable time, personnel, and training areas.

³The AR 5-10 process is followed when a stationing or realignment action (military and civilian) results in the involuntary separation or transfer, outside the commuting area, of 50 or more direct-hire, permanent U.S. citizen employees. This process is followed also when a stationing or realignment action impacts units or activities with 200 or more military authorizations. Additionally, the AR 5-10 process ensures that feasible stationing alternatives have been thoroughly assessed and operational requirements and environment and resource impacts have been properly balanced.

Fort Bragg, for example, headquarters for the Army's XVIIIth Airborne Corps and houses its 82nd Airborne Division. The 82nd is a rapid deployment force and must be ready to deploy on short notice. Because of their mission and the steady growth in requirements that must be satisfied at Bragg, FORSCOM and Fort Bragg officials have expressed concerns about the impact of the ROTC program on training and operational readiness. Fort Bragg officials state that while they consider ROTC's impact on troop readiness to be a significant issue today, it would be further exacerbated if Fort Bragg had to support both an advanced and basic camp operation, as envisioned in the Cadet Command proposal.

Fort Bragg officials indicated they are also experiencing increased usage of their facilities for training by the National Guard and Reserves. For example, the National Guard's 30th Infantry Brigade, which is designated as an enhanced brigade,⁴ is scheduled to train and mobilize at Fort Bragg. This training is normally done in the summer months, which could conflict with the ROTC advanced camp schedule. Fort Bragg officials also were concerned about housing the advanced camp there in 1996 because of a large training exercise also scheduled to take place; however, at the time we concluded our review, Army officials told us that the advanced camp would be held at Fort Bragg in 1996.

Questions Raised Regarding the Adequacy of Cadet Housing

Basic camp cadets at Fort Knox are housed in relatively more modern cinderblock structures, compared with cadets in advanced camps at Forts Bragg and Lewis who live in World War II (wwii) era wooden barracks. Because of their age and condition, these wwii barracks have been targeted for demolition within the next few years.

The Cadet Command proposal to increase its ROTC program at Fort Bragg would require using a larger number of the wwii era wooden barracks that in our view appear to be in much poorer condition than the ones currently being used. For example, the buildings in this category that we toured frequently had large holes in the interior walls, bathroom plumbing not in working condition, and stairways that appeared somewhat unstable. These additional barracks were scheduled to be demolished within the next year or so. However, even with these additional barracks, the Army would be faced with insufficient cadet housing at Fort Bragg. According to one

⁴The Army has 15 National Guard combat brigades that are responsible for reinforcing and augmenting active Army units if the active units are unable to handle two nearly simultaneous regional conflicts, as set forth in the Secretary of Defense's Bottom-Up Review.

Army estimate, almost \$70 million would be needed to construct new buildings at Fort Bragg to house approximately 5,000 camp personnel.⁵

We were told that a similar housing problem exists at Fort Benning, where ROTC program cadets would have to use WWII era barracks that are in need of repair. Army officials told us that to make them usable, the barracks at Fort Benning would have to be repaired at an estimated cost of over \$10 million.⁶

More Broad-Based Study Needed

Cadet Command's study that led to the proposal to close the ROTC region at Fort Knox focused on a short-term rather than a long-term solution to its restructuring needs. It did not fully address the impact on FORSCOM installations or the issue of cadet housing and costs. These issues suggest the need for a broader based study to examine how best to accommodate the long-term needs of ROTC within the context of the Army's total base structure. These issues are likely to require tradeoffs and decisions that extend beyond the purview of Cadet Command and TRADOC, its higher headquarters. They may require an Army-wide focus on issues affecting stationing and support of ROTC, particularly ROTC's summer camp programs. We believe that an Army-wide focus is desirable to minimize the need for new military construction. Should new military construction be required, an Army-wide focus would be important to determining where best to make such an investment considering that ROTC would only use the facilities for a portion of the year. Likewise, given the program of instruction currently employed for ROTC advanced camps, tradeoffs may be required in terms of potentially housing those camps on FORSCOM installations where personnel needed to support camp operations are more readily available than on TRADOC installations where extensive temporary duty travel and costs could be required. If one or more FORSCOM installations are to be used and readiness issues are to be minimized, then tradeoffs may be required in selecting installations to avoid adversely impacting combat units having early deployment missions.

⁵This number is a rough approximation of housing that would have been required for a basic and advanced camp at Fort Bragg; likewise, the cost cited represents only a preliminary estimate, not a formal proposal.

⁶Army officials also identified significant other start-up and operational costs of approximately \$18 million to move the regional headquarters to Fort Benning and have it operational for fiscal years 1996 and 1997.

Recommendation to the Secretary of the Army

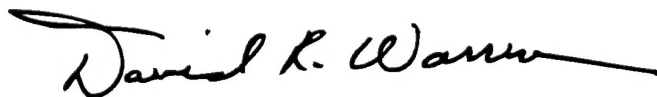
We recommend that the Secretary of the Army direct that a broad-based assessment be made of ROTC restructuring to include readiness, housing, and cost issues to accommodate the long-term needs of ROTC within the context of the Army's total base structure.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

While the Army did not provide written comments, the Army did provide official oral comments concurring with our recommendation. However, the Army did not indicate when it expected to initiate or complete the recommended study.

Our scope and methodology are discussed in appendix I. Unless you announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 15 days after its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Chairmen, Senate Committee on Armed Services, and Subcommittee on Defense, Senate Committee on Appropriations; the Chairmen, House Committee on National Security, and Subcommittee on National Security, House Committee on Appropriations; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and the Secretaries of Defense and the Army.

Please contact me at (202) 512-8412 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Major contributors to this report were Barry W. Holman, Assistant Director; Stephen G. DeSart, Evaluator-in-Charge; and Jacqueline E. Snead, Evaluator.



David R. Warren
Director, Defense Management Issues

Scope and Methodology

We held discussions with officials at the Department of the Army Forces Command and Cadet Command, including its headquarters and regions. We also had discussions with installation officials at Forts Bragg, Knox, and Lewis, and toured facilities at each of these locations. We did not tour base facilities at Fort Benning. We collected and performed limited analysis of data related to advanced and basic camps. The scope of our review did not extend to examining Cadet Command's Program of Instruction for its camps. We obtained briefings on and made a limited examination of available documentation associated with Cadet Command's study leading to the proposed closure of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps region at Fort Knox. We reviewed various data that were used in drafting the Cadet Command's Army Regulation 5-10 proposal, but we did not review the actual draft document.

We conducted our work between August 1995 and December 1995 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.